

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 EB-11 DRC-01

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R 242103Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7036

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1667

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HA, DR

SUBJECT: BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HAITI AND THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 3876; SANTO DOMINGO 3852

1. WE AGREE FULLY WITH YOUR THOUGHTS ON IMPROVED RELATIONS
BETWEEN HAITI AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AS EXPRESSED REFTEL.
ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER, GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IS DECIDEDLY
FAVORABLE TOWARD IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING.
HAITIANS IN GENERAL HARBOR LITTLE OR NO HOSTILITY
TOWARD THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC; DOMINICAN CULTURAL INFLUENCES
ARE FAIRLY STRONG HERE; AND ALL OF OUR CONTACTS, IN THE GOH
AND OUT, FAVOR CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE
D.R. MANY HAITIANS ARE AWARE, HOWEVER, OF GENERAL DOMINICAN
COOLNESS TOWARD HAITIANS, AND THOSE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT
RELATIONS WITH THE D.R. TEND TO FEEL THAT THE MAIN HANG-UP
TO CLOSER RELATIONS ARE ATTITUDES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
FRONTIER.

2. LAST EMBASSY HEARD OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON COMMERCE,
PAYMENTS, AND TRANSPORT PROPOSED BY THE D.R., SOME SIX
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MONTHS AGO THEY WERE UNDER STUDY IN GOH BY A SPECIAL

COMMITTEE HEADED BY THEN-UNDER SECSTATE FOR FINANCE SERGE FOURCAND. SINCE THAT TIME FOURCAND, ONE OF THE GOH'S MOST COMPETENT ECONOMISTS, HAS BEEN MADE SECSTATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND GIVEN HEAVY NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. DURING PAST YEAR THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN MAJOR PERSONNEL CHANGES, AMOUNTING TO OUSTER OF MOST HIGH OFFICIALS IN OFFICE WHEN AGREEMENTS WITH D.R. WERE FIRST PROPOSED. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT GOH HAS NO OBJECTION TO AGREEMENTS WITH THE D.R. IN PRINCIPLE, BUT THAT AGREEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN UNDER ACTIVE STUDY IN RECENT MONTHS OWING TO PERSONNEL CHANGES MENTIONED ABOVE AND PRESS OF OTHER BUSINESS. WITH A COMPETENT NEW ECONOMIC TEAM NOW IN THE SADDLE SINCE CABINET SHAKEUP OF LAST AUGUST, THE TIME NOW MAY WELL BE PROPITIOUS TO RENEW HAITIAN INTEREST IN THE BILATERAL AGREEMENTS.

3. IN VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN HAITI AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WE THINK THE TWO SIDES BASICALLY WILL HAVE TO SET THEIR OWN PACE ON NEW BILATERAL INITIATIVES, PERHAPS WITH SOME OCCASIONAL DISCREET ENOURAGEMENT ON OUR PART, AS YOU SUGGEST. IN THIS CONNECTION, IMMINENT ARRIVAL HERE OF NEW DOMINICAN AMBASSADOR VALDEZ HILARIO WOULD APPEAR TO PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR VALDEZ TO RAISE QUESTION OF STATUS OF THE AGREEMENTS IN HIS INITIAL MEETING(S) WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER, IF THE DOMINICANS WISH TO DO SO. BRINGING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO PERSONAL ATTENTION OF THE PRESIDENT IS SOMETIMES THE BEST WAY TO BREAK THEM LOOSE FROM BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA IN THE GOH. CORCORAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PORTA01667
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS CORCORAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PORT AU PRINCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730915/aaaaakqk.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: SANTO DOMINGO 3876; SANTO DOMINGO 38, 52
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HAITI AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
TAGS: PFOR, HA, DR
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005